

A TALE OF RED ROSES

By
GEORGE RANDOLPH CHESTER

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PROLOGUE.

"A Tale of Red Roses," by George Randolph Chester, is one of that author's best stories. It introduces a typical red-blooded boss politician of the type found in many American cities and a beautiful girl, with whom the boss is in love. Incidents of political intrigue and high finance are fascinatingly told. The author relates, as only he can, stirring incidents in ward, city and state politics. In his strenuous, spectacular wooing the politician makes the girl the favorite at a governor's ball. He has diplomats, artists and notables of every description pay her homage. He lavishes presents on her. He anticipates her every wish. His love is overpowering, all consuming. "A Tale of Red Roses" holds the interest of the reader from start to finish. Once begun it must be finished.

CHAPTER I.

The Dawning of a Tender Passion.

A COAL wagon, naturally choosing the rush hour for the performance, broke down in front of an extra crowded car, and traffic was promptly knotted for three blocks. A shining black automobile, following up the hill, came so close behind that the glare of the street car alone with unpleasant brightness on the occupants—a smiling red cheeked girl at the wheel; by her side a gray vandyked man with sinister lines running sharply downward from his dark pointed nose; in the tonneau a plainly dressed and modestly pretty black haired girl with large and rather kind eyes and a slender golden haired girl whose chief misadventure in life, from her expression, would have been taken to be mischievous fun.

"Hello, Bert!" called the girl at the wheel. "Can you unlash yourself?" The rather large young man in the neatly fitting blue suit who had been jammed against the rail of the rear platform had already begun to worm his way out of the ill humored throng on the street car.

"I'll try it," he laughed, "although I don't expect to have a button left." The crowd, its clothing still clammy from the recent rain, made way for him reluctantly, even though it needed the space he occupied, for the pompous looking, vandyked man in the car was Frank Marley, by all odds the most unpopular man in the city. He was the president of the street car company.

The young man in the neat blue suit, whose cheeks were flushed pink and whose luxuriant black mustache was curled in two amazingly perfect ringlets, picked his way daintily through the elush.

"Bert, this is the treat I promised you," said the girl at the wheel.

"Miss Fern Burbank," he guessed, clasping the blond visitor's hand, and at the same time he gave his left hand consecutively to little Jessie Peters. "Welcome to our muddy city."

"Thank you," smiled the golden haired young lady. "Of course this is handsome Bert Glider."

"Molly's been telling on me," he lightly answered as he took the folding seat just behind Mr. Marley, sitting sideways so that he could address the two girls in the tonneau and still enjoy the clean cut profile of Ethelyn Marley, known to her intimates as Molly, for no better reason than that it was a handier name.

The lights in the car ahead suddenly went out, and a groan arose from the miserable passengers on that suffocating vehicle. A roughly breathed man, who had been resting his elbow in the wickerwork of gray whiskered little Henry Peters, reached the point of heroic defiance.

He cursed the street car company and demanded, "Why don't they put on more cars?"

Little Henry Peters, who admitted he was a stockholder, took the company's part.

The conductor crowded back through the solidly packed aisle and the squirming platform to jerk hopefully at the trolley rope, and little Henry Peters, squeezed between his opponent and the fat butcher until bones could stand no more, popped from between their peripheries like the inside of a grape, landing in the solar plexus of a tired Hibernian, who had endured more than enough.

"Get out of my stomach, stockholder," he gruffly ordered and pushed little Henry's derby tightly down over his ears just as another machine drew out of the fretting rearward line and, stopped by the ragged gutter, rested abreast of Marley's machine. The conductor having restored the lights, the attention of the uncomfortable passengers was now directed to the newcomer, a heavy jawed man of middle

age, who sat as stolidly in his rumble about by the side of his driver as if he had been at home dining.

"It's Sledge," said the man with the frayed cigar. "He gets his little old rakeoff, too, from jamming sixty people into a forty passenger car. While he's running the town this rotten old line won't have any competition."

"Mr. Sledge is a good customer of mine," observed the fat butcher.

"There's one thing about Ben Sledge—he always keeps some big city improvement going on," announced the Irishman who had extinguished little Henry Peters.

Little Henry pulled his derby audibly off his head and rubbed the red circle it had left.

"Mr. Sledge is the workman's friend," he declared.

"Aw, shut up!" ordered the gaunt Celtic laborer and kicked his ankle by way of accidental emphasis.

It was strange that, while everybody on the car kept the name of Frank Marley sacred to their hatred, the name of Sledge, who was notorious throughout the United States for his utterly conscienceless methods of public theft, was received with equanimity.

Meanwhile Sledge, turning to see who his neighbors might be, met the eye of Frank Marley and nodded perfunctorily and then bent his entire attention on Molly, gazing at her in stolid concentration, with no more change of expression on his heavy features than if he had been reading a timetable.

Bert Glider noticed his rudeness and tried in a flood of intense aggravation to catch Sledge's eye and reprove him with a savage frown, but he might as well have tried to catch the eye of an oyster. Sledge, perfectly contented with the pleasing picture which sat before him, continued to stare calmly until Molly, discerning from Bert's countenance that something was wrong, turned to meet the small gray eyes of Sledge fixed thoughtfully upon her. She wheeled abruptly to her father.

"Isn't that the scandalous Sledge?" she asked, annoyed and still amused.

Her father nodded his head and smiled, his eyes becoming still more pointed in the process.

"Well, introduce him. I can make him stop staring, then," she ordered. "He can't drive on."

"I say, Sledge," called Marley, leaning forward. "This is my daughter, Molly."

Sledge tugged at his hat and smiled his acknowledgment of the introduction.

"Glad to meet you," he told Molly. "I didn't know you had such a fine looking girl, Marley. She's a corker," and once more he viewed Miss Molly with quiet approbation, in which there was a dawning glimmer of quite un-Sledge-like enthusiasm.

"First thing I know she'll be getting married," he said.

"Sure!" agreed Sledge, contemplating her earnestly in this new light. "I'd marry her myself."

The street car ahead gave a forward lurch, and the flamingly indignant Molly darted into the opening.

"The ugly brute!" she gasped.

There arrived on the morning train, escorted to the platform by a distinctly wonderful porter, a tall, big boned gentleman in a light gray suit of fine texture, a plump, careless man to whom one would instinctively turn for a tediously funny story, and a hard jawed man of a most forbidding expression, who looked about as commensurate as a cabbage. This gentleman, who looked about the hotel with his mouth shut, while the other two "scouted." Promptly at 11 o'clock they returned from their various directions and gathered in the room of the smiling tall one in the gray suit.

"Well, Timbers, is it as cheerful as we thought?" asked the host, settling himself in the most comfortable chair.

"Looks gay and merry to me, Bozzam," replied Mr. Timbers, folding his hands on his fat knee and frowning intently at a little slip of paper he held between his thumb and forefinger.

"Sledge is, of course, the whole works," said the host.

"What's the approach to Sledge?" "Tom Bendix," returned Timbers promptly, consulting his slip of paper.

"He siffs everything before it gets to the big boy, and you don't need any introductions. The best plan is to go right to his office and give him the straight story."

"How about Marley?" "A stuff," returned Timbers contemptuously. "Because he's the president of the street car company he thinks he invented electricity, and his noodle is swelled so that it cracks his scalp."

"You'd better lead me to this Bendix person," suggested Bozzam, rising. "Come on, Moodson."

Very automatically the silent man arose and accompanied Bozzam from the room with the air of being just as willing to do that as anything else. Just as automatically he followed into the office of Tom Bendix five minutes later and stood silently by, so oppressive in his inertia that he removed to himself all speculation about any one who was in his company.

"I want to talk electrical transportation with you," began Mr. Bozzam cheerfully as he laid the cards of Mr. Moodson and himself on the desk. "I am Charles W. Bozzam of New York, and this is Mr. Alvin Moodson of Philadelphia."

Bendix shook hands noncommittally with the two gentlemen and invited them to have seats.

"I don't know that I care to talk electrical transportation, but I'm willing to listen," he smiled.

"There isn't much to say," Bozzam stated. "We think your city needs new and better street car facilities, and we are here to give them to you if you will let us. The company I propose to form will be bona fide and will be incorporated for a million dollars in regular money. Mr. Moodson will take a quarter of a million of the stock himself. It might be some satisfaction to you to secure a report on Mr. Moodson from Dunn or Bradstreet."

Mr. Bendix grinned. "It sounds like a high grade proposition," he acknowledged. "I'll speak to some friends of mine about it this noon."

"When Tom Bendix walked into the Occident saloon he paused a moment at the bar, but even though his wishes were as potent here as those of omnipotence, since he represented the omnipotent Sledge, he had to wait, for both the choice bartenders were in delighted attendance on a careless fat man.

"Who's the entertainment committee?" asked Bendix, a trifle sharply.

"A thin stranger by the name of Timbers," rejoined Phil, vigorously.

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The Warner Brothers Company

Stopping Runaways Incapacitated Lynch

Policeman Patrick J. Lynch, attached to the third precinct station, living at 697 Iranistan avenue, who recently was injured in stopping the second runaway in two days, has returned to service after a short leave of absence.

On Friday, in front of Sacred Heart school on Park and South avenues he prevented probable injury to several children as a runaway team attached to a milk wagon was grabbed by the officer and brought to a standstill before the horses reached the crossing where the children were standing.

On Saturday noon on State street near Park avenue, when the policeman had just left traffic duty, screams of women attracted his attention and he turned around to see a horse attached to a light delivery wagon beyond control of driver. He stepped into the street, grabbed the reins, and the driver, who was a frightened driver, collapsed and loosened his hold on the horses, which threw Lynch against the horse, painfully straining the muscles of his back. The following day the pain was so aggravated that the officer was compelled to report off duty.

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The New England Steamship Co.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT, DISTRICT OF BRIDGEPORT, ss., PROBATE COURT.

January 25, 1916, A. D.

Estate of James M. Hogan, late of Bridgeport in said district deceased. Upon application praying—that administration be granted on said estate represented intestate—as per said application on file more fully appears, it is

Ordered, that said application be heard and determined at the probate office in Bridgeport in said district, on the 1st day of February, A. D. 1916, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and that notice thereof be given to all persons known to be interested in said estate to appear, if the see cause, at said time and place, and hear thereon—by publishing three times in some newspaper having a circulation in said district—a copy of this order, all at least three days before the day of hearing, and that return of notice given be made to this court.

Attest, PAUL L. MILLER, Judge.

A 26 s

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